Reviewer's report

Title: The use of complementary and alternative medicine after the completion of hospital treatment for colorectal cancer: Findings from a questionnaire study in Denmark

Version: 1 Date: 27 April 2014

Reviewer: Kathryn M Field

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. background, paragraph 2: “..it may have clinical implications”. Would be good to give a couple of examples of what clinical implications these may be. This ‘clinical implications’ is brought up again in the conclusion but there is no-where currently within the paper that the purported clinical implications are discussed.

2. Methods section ‘Analysis’ – it would probably be helpful to say here which variables you included in the logistic regression model. From the table I assume these were age, gender educational level and household income

3. I was not completely clear which stages of CRC were recruited. With the inclusion criteria, where it says ‘no evidence of current cancer’ and exclusion of patients receiving palliative care or with recurrence – does this mean the study recruited stage I-III CRC ie patients being treated with curative intent; and no stage IV patients?

4. Results section: Ideally there would be a small paragraph at the start outlining basic demographics – total number, %male/female, stage of CRC, median age and range, median time since completion of treatment for example. Currently the ‘results’ section just leaps into results without providing any feel for the demographic of the cohort. Eg right now I have no idea what the median age of this cohort was and whether this is representatiave of patients with CRC in general.

5.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. Methods: The first sentence is very similar to the sentence at the start of page 4 in the background section. Since it has already been stated, I would change the first sentence of the ‘methods’ section to something like ‘As part of the energy healing pragmatic trial described earlier, a baseline questionnaire which included….’ (or something like this); in order to avoid repetition

2. Also in your methods section you have said you used the term ‘alternative treatment’ to refer to the field of CAM in general and to individual therapies. Then
in the results section the term ‘alternative therapy’ is introduced in paragraph 1. I assume this means a specific therapy like reiki etc but I think you need to spell out in the methods section what ‘alternative therapy’ means because this is used in the results section. It is a little confusing because in the second paragraph of results, it is again ‘alternative treatment’ (for women n=47 and men n=15); these were referred to as having some form of ‘alternative therapy’ in the results first paragraph. Alternatively: perhaps you mean in paragraph 1 to say ‘alternative treatment’ rather than ‘alternative therapy’?

3. Results section: when describing the statistics in some of the paragraphs it is in the present tense, whereas the rest is past tense. Eg paragraph 2 (bottom of page 6): ‘there is a statistically significant relationship’ rather than ‘there was a statistically significant relationship’; and para 3 (page 7): ‘a relationship…..is noticeable’ rather than ‘was noticeable’. I think it would be preferable if everything was in past tense rather than present tense.

4. Table 2 and 3 and 4: I would order it from the highest number of responses to the lowest. That would make more sense to me and would be easier to read and take in.

5. Discussion: Don’t hyphenate between breast and cancer. It’s not breast-cancer, it’s breast cancer.

6. Several references (8,9,21,22) are Danish. The title I think should be translated to English

7. Discussion section, page 10: I am not sure whether you can say [25, cited in 26] as a reference? (this is used several times). Also, what is the superscript i in the second paragraph of this page?


Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

none

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests